START

The Environmental
Restoration of Hanford

Facts

Cleanup of Hanford's 1100 Area

Background

The 1100-EM-1 Operable Unit, a grouping of waste sites from past disposal practices or spills, will be the first operable unit on the Hanford Site to undergo an investigation that may lead to cleanup activities under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Seventy-three other operable units have been identified at Hanford.

The 1100-EM-1 Operable Unit is in Hanford's 1100 Area which houses vehicle maintenance operations and warehouse facilities. It covers 1.2 square miles in the southeastern corner of the Hanford Site along the northwestern edge of the city of Richland.

Seven spill or disposal sites have been identified. These may have received battery acid, paint and paint thinner, antifreeze, hydraulic fluids, waste oils and various solvents.

Because 1100-EM-1 is located about a half mile from public water supply wells, it has been assigned a high priority for investigation and potential cleanup.

Analysis of water samples at the nearby city of Richland well field by the state of Washington and DOE shows no evidence of contamination from 1100-EM-1 sources. Sampling from five wells drilled between 1100-EM-1 and the Richland wells does not show any evidence of contamination associated with 1100-EM-1. However, further sampling is required to determine whether a remedial action is warranted.

What's a Work Plan?

An operable unit work plan is an early stage of the CERCLA Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study (RI/FS) process. It describes the site in detail, lists what is known about wastes that have been disposed, and proposes a plan and schedule for investigations and studies to determine if remedial action is needed.

The RI/FS process will later include a proposed plan of action (or no action if sampling data indicate none is required). The public will have 45 days during which to comment on the proposed plan before a Record of Decision is reached on what needs to be done to satisfy cleanup requirements.

The RI/FS process for the 1100-EM-1 Operable Unit is expected to take about 3-1/2 years, concluding in late 1992. A detailed schedule is included in the Work Plan. Preliminary sampling activities have already begun. In the event an imminent hazard is detected, a quicker response action can be taken. Such a decision would also be available for public comment.

EPA to regulate work

The recently signed Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order — a three-party cleanup and compliance agreement between the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) — calls for one of the two regulatory agencies to be the lead agency for each of Hanford's 74 operable units.

For 1100-EM-1, the lead regulator is EPA. Actual work will be performed by DOE and its contractors.

What we know now

Only limited information is available about waste sites in the 1100-EM-1 Operable Unit, much of it gained from interviews with motor pool and maintenance workers.

Individual waste sites include:

- A sand pit into which waste battery acid was placed from about 1954-1977.
- A pit used to dispose of construction debris into which it is believed solvents, paint and paint thinner were disposed.
- Another pit into which antifreeze and degreasing solutions were occasionally placed.
- A site in the 1171 Building which previously contained a 5,000-gallon, underground storage tank for waste antifreeze. The tank, which is suspected of having leaked, was removed in 1986.
- A parking lot that may have received radioactive contamination in 1962 from a shipping cask on a parked truck trailer that was found to have external contamination. A recent radiological survey of the parking lot found no contamination.
- An inactive landfill, used mostly for office and construction debris from the early 1950s to 1970, that may have received other wastes, including drums of carbon tetrachloride or trichloroethylene.
- A discolored soil site near the 1171 Building discovered during preliminary inspections of the area. One or more drums of liquid material appear to have been poured onto the ground.

Your chance to participate

The 1100-EM-1 Operable Unit Work Plan will be available for public comment from June 15, 1989, to July 14, 1989. The EPA will consider all public comments before approving the Work Plan.

It can be reviewed at one of four information repositories: University of Washington's Suzzalo Library in Seattle; the Spokane Public Library; the Portland State University Library; and the Department of Energy Reading Room in Richland.

Written comments should be mailed to:

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For more information

Community relations representatives from Ecology, EPA and DOE are available to answer any questions you might have. They are:

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